

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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Frequently Asked Questions

Incomplete Information by Ryan J. Dexter

Are you familiar with the industry design responsibilities standard ANSI/TPI/WTCA 4-2002?

Structural Building Components Magazine is a great venue to discuss and share matters that affect our industry. Many of the questions that are sent to WTCA technical staff originate at the local level from an architect or engineer.

QUESTION:

In preparing a bid for a recent project, I (the Truss Designer) had to contact the Building Designer (architect) to clarify several aspects of the plans. I was not provided with a roof snow load or any drift loading.

We frequently reference our industry design responsibilities standard during the bid process. ANSI/TPI/WTCA 4-2002 states that the provided plans must contain the location, direction and magnitude of all dead and live loads applicable to each truss including the snow and snow drift (4.2.4).

The plans also called for the Truss Designer to provide specific erection and permanent bracing. As a Truss Designer, I am only responsible for the location of the required permanent web member bracing, not the building bracing. I told the architect that I would not be held responsible for determining the appropriate erection measures for the trusses, but that I would provide a Truss Placement Diagram to facilitate the placement of the trusses as well as a copy of the BCSI 1-03 booklet.

The architect responded to me that WTCA's stance was absurd and that the organization had no authority over him. How would you respond?

ANSWER:

It certainly seems like this architect is trying to get you to do his work. According to the IBC 2000, the responsibilities of the architect to provide loading information are pretty clear:

106.1 Submittal documents.

...construction documents shall be prepared by a registered design professional where required by the statutes of the jurisdiction in which the project is to be constructed...

106.1.1 Information on construction documents.

...Construction documents shall be of sufficient clarity to indicate the location, nature and extent of the work proposed and show in detail that it will conform to the provisions of this code and relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations...

1603.1 General.

...design loads and other information pertinent to the structural design...shall be clearly indicated on the construction documents for parts of the building or structure.

Passing the responsibility of providing design loads to the Truss Designer is not only contrary to the WTCA design responsibilities policy, but is also contrary to the prevailing model building code. Additionally, it is difficult to believe that the Building Designer can provide an appropriate building design without knowing what loads he/she wants all the structural elements to carry. This should be a clear warning signal about the competency of the Building Designer and the knowledge or integrity of the group requesting the bid.

If you decide to bid on this project, you should document all the assumptions you have made and get them approved in writing by the Building Designer and the group with whom you are contracting. This is the kind of project in which someone is looking to do the minimum amount of planning while looking for a deeper pocket to pick if the job goes bad.

In instances like these, WTCA's design responsibility policy can be a good barometer on the risk you may be assuming by taking on a given project.

Editor's Note: ANSI/TPI/WTCA 4-2002: National Standard and Recommended Guidelines on Responsibilities for Construction Using Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses can be viewed in its entirety at:

www.woodtruss.com.

To pose a question for this column, email us at faq@woodtruss.com. To view other questions visit the [WTCA website](#).

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